

South Tyneside College – Local Board

Venue: Conference Room 1, South Shields

Date: Wednesday 29 November 2017

Time: 4.00pm – 5.50pm

Present: Malcolm Grady (in the Chair)
Eddie Beckett
Daniel Carr
Matthew Laidler
Alison Mason
Mark Overton
Elaine Smith
Andrew Watts

In Attendance: Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)
Alison Maynard (Principal)
Bill Midgley (Chair of Tyne Coast College Board)

ITEM NO.	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.</p> <p>There were no apologies from absence to be received.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <p>Members were reminded to declare any conflict of interest as they arose on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the STC Quality Committee held on 14 June 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>3.1 Equality and Diversity Report</u></p> <p>It was noted that the College Board had approved the Equality and Diversity report.</p> <p><u>3.2 Quality Report</u></p> <p>It was confirmed that the key issues within the Quality report had been reported to the Board.</p>	

4. Principal's Report

The purpose of this report was to provide the Board with a Principal's update.

Alison Maynard (AM) presented her report drawing the attention of governors to the following matters:

Student Numbers

Student recruitment was down for 16-18 however, the College continued to recruit and use strong marketing and social media trends to access these learners. There was to be a January recruitment plan, which would be mainly aimed at level 1 learners.

Adult recruitment was currently below target although the new distance learning programmes allowed multiple start dates during the year. There would also be a significant number of enrolments coming from short courses.

Apprenticeships were down mainly due to the slow sign up from employers in light of funding changes. However, the College currently had £251,000 in the pipeline for sign up.

Q. Harder to attract owing to Levy? Yes. Nationally the government was 61% below its target. AM felt that TCC had healthy numbers based on a target reforecast.

Q. No people or no opportunities? There were a number of live vacancies but there was no one to fill them.

BM reported that at the recent AoC Conference it was confirmed that recruitment to apprenticeships was a national issue with the larger businesses not using their apprenticeship levy and smaller businesses appearing not to understand the new system. The amount of time apprentices were required to spend at College appeared to be a barrier for some companies. It was stated that there was a need to understand what the College could offer businesses and tailor courses to meet their needs.

Areas of concern were reported and discussed these being:

- Computing
- Sport
- Science
- Catering

Areas of over recruitment included Art and Design, High Needs, Media/Games and the Career College North East and Youth College.

Q. Change of model? Some long courses had been changed to short courses. AM explained that there was a demand for reskilling or multiskilling, which were best met through short courses.

Achievement Rates

Achievement rates were high and continued to improve well above National Averages. The overall college achievement rates improved from 83.5% to 88.9%. (16-18 figure was 86.4% and adults 91.7%).

Apprenticeship rates were disappointing, 60.3% against 68.9% nationally.

Following an internal review on the management of subcontracting, a number of subcontractors had been identified as underperforming and the College had taken immediate action and revoked contracts, where appropriate. Underperformance in these areas accounted for 36% of the provision for 2016/17.

Governors questioned the purpose of outsourcing if internal provision was good and discussed the management of risk when outsourcing. It was stated that there were two key factors, these being the robustness of management monitoring and a need to only focus on partners where the College could not offer internally. Governors stated that some rigor needed to be applied for both internal and external provision.

AM reported that high grades in English and Maths had improved but not as much as had been hoped. However, the College had appeared to have performed well when compared to other Colleges. It was noted that maths had moved up by 7.6% to 35% and English increased by 6.6% to 23% (National average 21% for high pass rates).

Q. How is impact measured? Curriculum Improvements Reviews (CIR) continued to contribute to high quality provision. The English and Maths Manager was focussed on data, which fed into the whole programme. Governors felt that the learner journey needed to be emphasised in reports to the Board. Governors were informed that there was a more measured approach by Ofsted and that progress being made by the learner was now the key factor. The College was looking at ensuring that there was a more robust tracking system in place that clearly identified milestones and action needed.

Q. Staffing issues identified in maths department, anything governors could do to support? AM explained that she hoped to have at least two back at work next week and agencies were being called upon to provide cover. Staff at Tynemet was another cover option, timetables permitting.

Curriculum Improvement Reviews

AM explained that any curriculum area could take part in Curriculum Improvement Reviews (CIR) to ensure continuous improvement in learning, teaching and assessment and outcomes for learners. The CIR also provided a mechanism for identifying and sharing the outstanding and innovative practice that occurred in learning contexts across the College.

In order to rate the risk of each course running in South Tyneside College, a number of factors were considered and these were shared with governors. A scale of risk was assigned to each of these factors and the corresponding risk ratings were applied to each course. These were multiplied together to give an overall risk rating.

The current top ten risk courses were provided for information.

It was noted that areas where Curriculum Improvement Reviews would be undertaken from a cross college perspective would be in:

- Apprenticeships

- Maths
- Value Added

AM indicated that CIRs had led to improvement across the College and examples were detailed in her report e.g. Motor Vehicle – 1-1 support offered and following re-observations two staff members improved to grade 2 and one staff member improved to grade 1. Interventions had also resulted in a positive impact on achievement rates.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) was seen as part of the CIR process and ensured the right student was on the right course. Governors were informed that appropriate advice should be given at three stages, pre course, on course and post course and offered in particular to Level 3s. The College was advised to cover safeguarding in its advice and guidance to L3s as there was the possibility that students would be moving away from home.

Destinations

A report detailing the destination of learners was provided for information.

Q. Are students captured early enough? BM felt there were 2 main barriers to overcome with apprenticeships, these being parents and teachers in schools. It was accepted that some schools were not providing the right guidance for pupils leaving school as it was in their interests to retain them wherever possible even though it might not be the best option for the pupil. There appeared to be too much pressure on academic success and Ofsted's role needed to change. A view was expressed that discussions with potential college students should start in Yrs 7 and 8 and parents needed to be educated about vocational opportunities.

There were pockets of success with this e.g. Career College, but governors felt there needed to be a cross college approach e.g. strategies, role models, case studies etc. Governors were reminded that Career College students had been used as advocates for the following year's recruitment and reference was made to an event that staff had attended at St Joseph's Catholic Academy.

Q. Reassurance required that robust systems in place to monitor development in areas requiring improvement? ES indicated that the College had a robust system in place and only fine-tuning was required. It was felt that the CIRs were a demonstration of attention to detail that was not often seen in other colleges and governors should take confidence from the information being received.

Finance

A full financial report was not yet available as budgets had been revisited for further scrutiny by staff following updated information.

Youth College (YC)

AM reported that some learners had not been suitable for the YC, which meant that they had been returned to their school(s).

	<p><u>Retention</u></p> <p>Retention was consistent with the previous year (improvement slightly from 99.2% to 99.6%).</p> <p><u>Behaviour</u></p> <p>Confidential item.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Committee agree to receive and acknowledge the report and ask that the key issues are presented to the Tyne Coast College Board. ii. That a report be presented to the next meeting on Information, Advice and Guidance (pre-course, on course and post course). 	<p>AM</p> <p>AM</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>FE College Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan 2017-18</p> <p>Confidential item.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Chair of College Board – update on merger</u></p> <p>The Chair invited Mr Midgley (BM), as Chair of Governors of Tyne Coast College, to update the Local Board about the merger between South Tyneside College and TyneMet College.</p> <p>It was stated that the merger had been successful and completed on time (effective from 1 August 2017).</p> <p>BM reminded governors that this had been the only merger to come out of the North East Area review and only because the Colleges had agreed to slow down the process to fit in with areas review timelines.</p> <p>BM indicated that one of the reasons why the merger had been so successful was owing to the Board(s) taking difficult decisions at an early stage. However, it was acknowledged that there was some fine-tuning yet to be done to complete the task e.g. harmonisation of contracts. The FE Commissioner had praised the way in which the Colleges had worked together describing it as a model on how to conduct a successful merger.</p> <p>It was noted that new governance arrangements were now in place but there was an ongoing review on the reporting arrangements to the Board(s).</p> <p>BM fed back messages from the recent AoC conference where the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills indicated that there was to be no additional funding for the FE sector and encouraged them to work together more effectively. Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP paid tribute to FE Colleges indicating that funds would be made available to Colleges under a Labour Government. However, he indicated that Colleges would need to become more accountable, although it was uncertain as to how this would be achieved.</p>	

	It was estimated that 10% of Colleges were struggling financially and facing intervention. Also, recent Ofsted inspections had seen a fall in good grades being awarded. Overall, it was felt that the FE Sector had become a challenging environment and would face greater scrutiny in the years ahead.	
7.	Identification of Confidential Items Resolved: That the following items are to remain confidential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 04 – Principal’s Report (Behaviour) • Item 05 - FE College Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan 2017-18 	
8.	Date and Time of Next Meeting It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Wednesday 21 February 2018 at 4.00pm.	

Chair’s signature.....

Date:.....